

How Tiburcio Vasquez, Noted Bandit, Died

Did I know Tiburcio Vasquez? Of course, I know Vasquez. Everybody knows the name and children. He never robbed a woman, and was always mighty good to little children. But for all, he was a mighty bad egg—mighty bad. I don't mind telling you about him, for there are lots of people in this generation who never heard of him.

The above remark was made by an old Californian a few days ago. "It was in the time of the Vigilantes," with an excited twinkle in the old eyes, "and didn't that wily, little devil rise up the chase of their lives? The officers would think they had scared him clear out to the borders, and puttin' their heads to other business, forgot him, till he'd give 'em such a jolt right under their noses, cut up a piece of whisky and off and out of reach before they could say 'Scat!'."

"Tiburcio was naturally a smart boy, so when he was 16 he thought he had learned enough at the common school of the times to set out in life for himself. He didn't like to work—not a bit—so he set up a dance house—that was his ruin."

"The class of women who went to these fandangoes, were halfbreeds, holding a fascinating power, peculiar to cross breed beauties of human brutes, just bordering on to civilization—and it's a mighty fatal influence to fall under. I can tell you—and the man, well, they thought you couldn't be a man, you'd do a something desperate or daring."

"His born companion—many years older—was Anastasio Garcia, a robber that was striking terror in Monterey county. Tiburcio took him for a leader. He was a regular visitor of Tiburcio's dance hall, and between this vigilante and Tiburcio grew a love that snapped only in death. Garcia was engaged in a quarrel with one Jose Guerra, his rival for the hand of a husky, dusky beauty. Vasquez took a hand to help Garcia, and when the mischief was stirring red hot. Hardly moved, the constable, put in an appearance and in trying to quiet things was killed."

"The dance broke up, and Garcia, Guerra and Tiburcio, between whom lay the murder, fled. Guerra was caught by the Vigilantes' committee next morning and hanged. Garcia got away, but later was caught down in Los Angeles county and hanged for the same crime. Tiburcio was hidden by friends until everything quieted down. Tiburcio Vasquez's bandit life began with this bloody date."

"His fandango house was shut up, dead broke, a hunted dog by the law, and with the hatred of the Mexican for the gringo planted in the breast, who could you expect but going to the bad?"

"Soon after he got in with a desperate cattle thief gang and spread terror as a leader from the first. For five years they piled their trails, then the Vigilantes got after them and only one or two escaped the grapevine dance. Tiburcio got away, boldly formed a new company, was made leader, and for several years stuck nowhere safe in Santa Clara, Merced, Fresno and Tulare counties. Then he was caught stealing horses and sent up for five years. He escaped but was caught and returned."

"Confinement produced only a change from one kind of stealing to another. He went to gambling, locating out here at the New Almaden and Enriquita mines, south of town."

"Round out there, and, yes, here in San Jose, for three years he lived the life of a sport, as he used to say, but nature's call of the wild got the better of a gentler voice that at times curbed the restless spirit, and early one morning in 1884 the Italian butcher at the Enriquita mine was stabbed and shot to death. Tiburcio was selected at the inquest as the Spanish interpreter. The miners were all Mexicans, and Tiburcio was the only native Californian in the place who could speak English. The testimony given in Tiburcio taken from the witness on the stand threw no light on the murder, so nobody was arrested. Tiburcio suddenly left the district and didn't come back."

"Well, it turned out afterward that Tiburcio translated the testimony which was damaging to himself to suit himself. He and another fellow had been under the very shadow of the railroads and squirmed free. Oh, he was a colt."

"The country had a breathing spell for two or three months, then 'hot regions' on wheels came down on us. Tiburcio in the saddle with two old pals, Francisco Barzinas and Narciso Rodriguez, began by robbing the Visalia stage at Soap Lake. They drove the stage out of the road into an old field, robbed the eight passengers, tied 'em hand and foot, laid 'em by the side of the stage with their faces turned to the broiling hot sun, and rode off and left 'em. It was many hours before they were discovered and released. I can tell you we were all fighting mad then, and ready to hang the last one. Getting a posse hurriedly together, we started in hot pursuit. We overtook the three near Monterey."

"Rodriguez was captured and got two years in state prison. Barzinas was killed, and Tiburcio, the little, wily, little devil was shot through the body the ball striking the right breast and lodgin' under the left shoulder."

"Although as he said me afterward, he thought he was done for the stood his ground, fired shot after shot, until he had killed one constable; then put spurs to his horse and rode sixty miles before he halted."

"And that reminds me to tell you, he never rode any but a white horse, and always rode that so hard the eyes went out, only to be supplied by another, near as possible like the last one."

"Soon as he was able to leave his canyon hiding place he left for Mexico. With a rest of a month he returned by water to San Francisco. Presumably had got there ahead of him, the two met and were having high jinks when Sheriff Moore of Alameda county swooped down, captured Tiburcio and barely missed Rodriguez."

"Like a duck to water, Tiburcio took to Canton canyon, and there he gathered about him the worst band of desperadoes. It was formed at Canton on August 24, 1897, for the stated purpose of plundering, even to murder."

"The band was composed of Tiburcio, Leiva, Chavez, Moreno and Gonzalez. Tiburcio was forced into it, and he, the balance of the gang, the very love of lawlessness."

"The tragedy at Tres Pinos, when Snyder's store was robbed and three men murdered, the first work of this band, aroused the whole state. When the news was flashed over the wires to Sheriff Ames of Santa Clara county he in turn telegraphed to Sheriff Wassen of Monterey to join in pursuit."

"My, my! Them were hot times. Things kept getting darker, in spite of every effort on the part of the Vigilantes, then fellows went as fast free as greased lightning. Gov. Booth offered \$15,000 for Tiburcio, dead or alive."

"Did this fact not make him afraid of traitors and more cautious?"

"Not a bit. Every day brought with it new robberies. He and Chavez alone hold up the stage at Coyote Hole station on the Owen River road, captured eighteen prisoners, robbed the whole business and left 'em in the lurch. It's a mighty long lane that has many a turn, and the turn came at last to Vasquez. He was fooled to Greek George's house, near Los Angeles, and there captured, shot to pieces, though before he gave in."

"Betrayed at last!" I exclaimed. "You bet your boots!" ejaculated our narrator, with a squint of the eye, as he looked steadily at me.

"Tiburcio's ruling passion was a love for the women, and it's no wonder just to him to say women in turn fairly worshipped him. I never saw the like; he fairly bewitched 'em. A husband never cut no figure with him."

"What did he look like, his general appearance, as you recollect him?"

"Well, he was medium height, slender form, supple, graceful, quick and nervous in manner, a good dresser—he commanded attention anywhere he went. His hair was jet black, skin fair, features clear cut, and good to look at, except his thick lip, broad coarse mouth. But he always had such a winning smile playing about the corners that softened it, or when the lips broadened into a laugh he showed a row of even, white teeth good to look at. His black eyes deep sunken in his head, laughed when in a good humor, but got away when the tiger was aroused in him. A glimmer there that smacked of an adler's sting or a rattlesnake's fang."

"Nobody would ever take this well-mannered young fellow with his low mellow voice for the worst bandit—except Murieta—that ever bulldozed the state. He worked a confidence on everybody who met him, and it was this very gift that he owed his liberty for so long."

"How did he fall at last?"

"Well, it was a case of love and vengeance. You see, he'd gone it all his life pretty rough on the fair sex. He ran off with a young daughter, scarcely 15 years of age, of his best friend near Canton canyon, was shot by the father and the girl rescued, made off with Salazar's wife and was nearly shot to death by the husband, and then—well, he got his match when he ran off with Leiva's wife."

"When Tiburcio went to Canton canyon several months before the raid and murders at Snyder's store he met Leiva's wife. She was a mighty pretty blump, Mexican woman of 25. Leiva was a Chilean, several years older, a fine looking, strapping young fellow, with an honest, open, frank face, but not the lady's man that Tiburcio was."

"Rosaria fell in love with Tiburcio, and it was through her persuasions her husband joined Tiburcio and his freebooters' life. Leiva's first wrongdoing was at Tres Pinos. After that, crime joined the two men in daily life and travels. Rosaria was with 'em. The close attention of Tiburcio had ripened to intimacy."

"At last the truth dawned upon Leiva, arousing all his vengeful passions, but not till they were camping at Rock Creek canyon did the crime come. By a ruse he worked it round so he could play detective on Tiburcio."

"He had given his wife all the love of his strong soul and had even committed crime to please her. His heart was broken. He lay down on the ground and shaking with sobs cried in dumb agony the whole night through. When day broke the strength of the man came back to him. He got up, quietly dressed himself, then went to his chief and told him all he'd seen and that he dissolved partnership."

"They say Tiburcio in answer said not a word, but Leiva with a 'Senor, you are my enemy forever' took his wife and children, hitched up his team and started for Elizabeth Lake. 'Here he left his family and on horseback started on his revenge, his first step the capture and death of the betrayer of his home and happiness. He knew Tiburcio's plans, his hiding places and the ones who always spied for him. The most complete vengeance that he could wreak would be when he delivered himself up, betrayed Tiburcio to the authorities, turned state's evidence, saved his own hide and sent Tiburcio to the gallows. With this laid out in his mind he rode to Delano station and gave himself up to Deputy Sheriff Johnson of Los Angeles county."

"Tiburcio secretly followed them to Elizabeth Lake and got there just after Leiva had gone. He persuaded the woman to leave her two children and go with him, where in the San Bernardino mountains they kept for months on the move to evade the officers. At last the officers got so close on his trail that he had to leave the woman and kids out. But it wasn't no use to run. Leiva, like a wolf after blood, made it easy to track him, and finally a decoy was set at old Greek George's house near Los Angeles, and after being shot all to pieces he was captured."

"At first it was thought he'd die, but he'd been born to be hanged, and so he didn't. After Leiva gave himself up, and his workmates leaked out Tiburcio's friends were so bitter they'd have killed Leiva if he hadn't been sent to that jail over there 'cross the way for safety."

"The trial was the most exciting of the times. Leiva's testimony proved that Tiburcio killed two of the three slaughtered at Tres Pinos. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged."

"The officers had a time of it, for he made up his mind to starve to death. For a week after pardon was refused no coaxing could tempt him to eat."

"To take a cigarette, madam. One can discuss things so much more comfortably over a smoke."

"Moderernity is all very well," said an elderly woman, "but in an episode the other day I think it was carried too far. In response to an advertisement a housekeeper called to see about taking a place with me. She was an intelligent, capable young woman, trim and pretty, and I thought highly of her till she took a slice of garlic cake, and extending it to me, said:

"Do take a cigarette, madam. One can discuss things so much more comfortably over a smoke."

Neither threats nor begging had any effect."

"At last the wife of one of the jailers who had been very good to him cooked a meal herself and carried it to the bars through which food and drink were passed to him. 'Come,' he made up a dinner of all your favorite dishes myself."

"Just as gentle as a baby he answered her: 'No, no; I think too much; head, heart too sick.'"

"But you'll starve yourself to death," she said.

"With a great big gulp down his throat he answered, in a bitter voice: 'Never die by rope; too much shame to starve to death.'"

"Vasquez" nagged the woman, "you know men say, you are brave, but I say you are one—yes, one—coward."

"With a yell he leaped from his cot he hadn't quit for a week and pounded the bars with his fist."

"Me a coward! How dare you say it! How dare you!"

"The woman trembled, but, urged by the jailers, she went on."

"Yes, you are a coward, you are not brave enough to take the jailer's line that's been given you and die like a man, if it is at the end of the rope."

"Well, he hadn't thought of that. To starve like a dog was a new idea. He stood as if nailed to the floor, not a muscle in body or face moved, then, with a great big sob in his voice, his face white as cotton, he stretched out his trembling hands. 'Give me food, give me drink; no gringo shall ever say Tiburcio Vasquez was afraid to die.'"

"Somehow he got it into his head his body was to be turned over to some dissecting society after his death, to which he bitterly objected. He wanted to be sure he was going to have a coffin, and he asked the authorities if he couldn't take a look at it. So the night before he was hanged the undertaker appeared with his gruesome home on his shoulder and set it down in the cell where we were all standing. It was a very nice, black covered, wooden coffin lined with white satin. Tiburcio calmly looked it all over, felt the handles to see if they were strong, ordered the top off, and, by gracious if he didn't knock us cold by pulling off his shoes and lightly stepping inside the thing."

"Let me see how it fits," he says, and deliberately lays himself down, stretched out and tried the pillow under his head. Getting up he took the satin pillow from its place, readjusted it, then tried the narrow bed again. He rolled his head from side to side on it, but still it didn't suit. Out he got and showed the undertaker what changes the pillow needed to make his head rest easy like."

"There not much more to tell, except that he ate his salt like a man. His neck was broken on the drop and all that's left of one of the most polished daredevil robbers of the Pacific Coast is a handful of ashes out yonder in Santa Clara cemetery."

"What happened to Leiva the avenger?"

"Tiburcio's friends swore they'd kill him. He was kept in prison several weeks after the hanging to let things cool down, then on his wish the authorities took him and his children and put 'em on board a ship for his old home in Chile. Some say they never got there, but I don't know whether that's so or not."

"Rosaria stayed about to get a look at Tiburcio as long as he lived and followed him to his grave, then she disappeared and I don't know what became of her."

Okapi Specimens.

Another specimen of the okapi has been added to the exhibited series of animals in the Natural History museum at South Kensington, making three in all of this remarkable creature now to be seen in that institution.

This latest acquisition is the specimen obtained by the Alexander-Golding expedition on the River Welle in the northernmost corner of the Congo Free State, some hundred miles from the nearest place where examples of the okapi have hitherto been found.

The Welle species, as seen in the cleverly mounted specimens at South Kensington, is a good deal darker than the specimens from the Ituri and Semliki forests, and may turn out a distinct local race of the animal. The Alexander-Golding specimen has a further interest attached to it in being the only one of the okapi captured by a white man first hand, all the other skins in Europe having been obtained through natives.—London Globe.

HOW THE NAME ORIGINATED.

(Cleveland Leader.) A northern tourist who was riding in a leisurely way through western Georgia stopped one hot day to rest at a cottage occupied by an old colored man and wife. "Uncle," he said, fanning himself with his hat, "how much further is it to Col. Jeffrey's big plantation?"

"Bout five miles, sub," answered the aged darky.

"Good roads?"

"Mostly up hill an' down, sub."

"Have you ever been at the Colonel's place?"

"I wuz bawn dah, sub."

"They call it the Renfrew, don't they?"

"Yes, sub."

"How did it ever get the name of Renfrew?"

"I allers 'lowed, boss, it wuz 'cause de man wot owned it befo' de wah run froo wid it in 'bout four years."

MODERNITY CARRIED TOO FAR.

(Minnesota Press.)

"Modernity is all very well," said an elderly woman, "but in an episode the other day I think it was carried too far. In response to an advertisement a housekeeper called to see about taking a place with me. She was an intelligent, capable young woman, trim and pretty, and I thought highly of her till she took a slice of garlic cake, and extending it to me, said:

"Do take a cigarette, madam. One can discuss things so much more comfortably over a smoke."

THE SPIRIT AND FEAST OF THANKSGIVING

Side by side with the "long, unbroken custom handed down to us by our forefathers" of setting apart annually a special day for Thanksgiving has also dwelt with us the idea that we must have as nearly as practicable the same kind of a feast as that enjoyed by the first settlers upon these shores. From a sentimental viewpoint this theory is undoubtedly correct, and would really work out beautifully were it not for certain changed conditions affecting our supply of seasonable provisions. A regulation plan of directions for getting up a proper Thanksgiving dinner even this year would suggest the providing of oysters, turkeys, chicken for chicken pie, with vegetables, fruits, fish pastries, and delicacies in abundance. The idea is to arrange a composite meal which shall comprise as nearly as may be the various fruits and products of the earth. And a good and praiseworthy idea it is, too, if only everybody had the wherewithal to purchase these fruits; but unfortunately this must be an oysterless and a turkeyless Thanksgiving for many persons. The causes contributing to this state of things cannot be discussed here; nor does it much matter to the man who enters a meat market and sees a turkey which he longs to purchase for his family, but which he knows he cannot afford, just why the commodity, with many others, is so far beyond his means. The thing is he knows it is beyond his means and therefore he will have to do without it. He must to some extent give up the idea of trying to imitate that first Thanksgiving sinner in the forest.

In some respects the preparation of that feast, or the obtaining of the articles comprised in it, must have been a comparatively simple matter. The settlers had but to take down the fowling piece, go into the woods, and bring home the wild game. Well filled oyster beds lay quite near the shore. The harvest was fruitful; grain, wild fruits, such vegetables as they knew how to raise were abundant; nuts of various kinds were plentiful—what, then, was to hinder the making ready a feast that should fitly supplement the public Thanksgiving rendered unto the Lord? There is the point. The feast is but the outward sign or token of that which underlies the whole Thanksgiving idea. It is the feeling in the heart, the sentiment of gratitude for good received, that, after all, constitutes the real Thanksgiving. With this feeling present the absence of the turkey, even though he is everywhere acknowledged to be the king of the feast, need not be counted a misfortune.

We are too apt to forget just how things were with the settlers. We take the idea of that great historical feast into our minds, and we overlook the dark shadows that must have been in that first Thanksgiving picture. It would be a good thing if we would try to remember the "little grayed" by the water's edge, and make an effort to recall what the record says, that not one household in the New Massachusetts colony but had recently been visited by death or severe and protracted illness. But still the preparations for the feast went on, and at a convenient time they solemnized a day of thanksgiving unto the Lord."

Surely we can learn a lesson from the simple faith of these pious souls. We are not called upon to-day to suffer the privations which were the lot of our forefathers, but any year may bring changed conditions which may necessitate more or less self-denial on our part. If the man who finds himself unable to buy material for an expensive dinner knows that his family circle is complete and unbroken, and everybody in health and fully able to enjoy the dinner when it is prepared, he surely has good and sufficient cause for thankfulness.

So, even if in some cases the turkey's place must be filled by a chicken, and perhaps not any too large a chicken, and even if a number of plainer dishes have to be made to answer for the assortment of rich food which we have always considered necessary for the Thanksgiving table, let us not depart on this account from any of the time-honored customs belonging to the day. The family reunions can be complete and enjoyable. The tallest grand child and the newest baby can each be accorded their full share of attention, and old and young alike may all have part in the joyousness and general good cheer.

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343 W. 14th Street, NEW YORK CITY.

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Surely we can learn a lesson from the simple faith of these pious souls. We are not called upon to-day to suffer the privations which were the lot of our forefathers, but any year may bring changed conditions which may necessitate more or less self-denial on our part. If the man who finds himself unable to buy material for an expensive dinner knows that his family circle is complete and unbroken, and everybody in health and fully able to enjoy the dinner when it is prepared, he surely has good and sufficient cause for thankfulness.

So, even if in some cases the turkey's place must be filled by a chicken, and perhaps not any too large a chicken, and even if a number of plainer dishes have to be made to answer for the assortment of rich food which we have always considered necessary for the Thanksgiving table, let us not depart on this account from any of the time-honored customs belonging to the day. The family reunions can be complete and enjoyable. The tallest grand child and the newest baby can each be accorded their full share of attention, and old and young alike may all have part in the joyousness and general good cheer.

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Side by side with the "long, unbroken custom handed down to us by our forefathers" of setting apart annually a special day for Thanksgiving has also dwelt with us the idea that we must have as nearly as practicable the same kind of a feast as that enjoyed by the first settlers upon these shores. From a sentimental viewpoint this theory is undoubtedly correct, and would really work out beautifully were it not for certain changed conditions affecting our supply of seasonable provisions. A regulation plan of directions for getting up a proper Thanksgiving dinner even this year would suggest the providing of oysters, turkeys, chicken for chicken pie, with vegetables, fruits, fish pastries, and delicacies in abundance. The idea is to arrange a composite meal which shall comprise as nearly as may be the various fruits and products of the earth. And a good and praiseworthy idea it is, too, if only everybody had the wherewithal to purchase these fruits; but unfortunately this must be an oysterless and a turkeyless Thanksgiving for many persons. The causes contributing to this state of things cannot be discussed here; nor does it much matter to the man who enters a meat market and sees a turkey which he longs to purchase for his family, but which he knows he cannot afford, just why the commodity, with many others, is so far beyond his means. The thing is he knows it is beyond his means and therefore he will have to do without it. He must to some extent give up the idea of trying to imitate that first Thanksgiving sinner in the forest.

In some respects the preparation of that feast, or the obtaining of the articles comprised in it, must have been a comparatively simple matter. The settlers had but to take down the fowling piece, go into the woods, and bring home the wild game. Well filled oyster beds lay quite near the shore. The harvest was fruitful; grain, wild fruits, such vegetables as they knew how to raise were abundant; nuts of various kinds were plentiful—what, then, was to hinder the making ready a feast that should fitly supplement the public Thanksgiving rendered unto the Lord? There is the point. The feast is but the outward sign or token of that which underlies the whole Thanksgiving idea. It is the feeling in the heart, the sentiment of gratitude for good received, that, after all, constitutes the real Thanksgiving. With this feeling present the absence of the turkey, even though he is everywhere acknowledged to be the king of the feast, need not be counted a misfortune.

We are too apt to forget just how things were with the settlers. We take the idea of that great historical feast into our minds, and we overlook the dark shadows that must have been in that first Thanksgiving picture. It would be a good thing if we would try to remember the "little grayed" by the water's edge, and make an effort to recall what the record says, that not one household in the New Massachusetts colony but had recently been visited by death or severe and protracted illness. But still the preparations for the feast went on, and at a convenient time they solemnized a day of thanksgiving unto the Lord."

Surely we can learn a lesson from the simple faith